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HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF

OLD FAIR HAVEN

WITH

ADDITIONAL NOTES

CURTIS C. BUSHNELL

J. T. HATHAWAY



Class F104

Book .F18B9

PRESENTED BY

HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF

OLD FAIR HAVEN

WITH

ADDITIONAL NOTES

The sight of ye harbour did so please ye captain of ye ship and all ye passengers, that he called it the Fayre Haven.—*Davenport*

NEW HAVEN
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HISTORICAL SKETCH OF OLD FAIR HAVEN

By Curtis C. Bushnell

So far as the writer is aware, no effort has ever been made to sketch the earlier history of Fair Haven, even as briefly as this. There is much about the place, to be sure, that challenges interest. Some new Robert Louis Stevenson might well have been attracted by the noble view from the Heights of the harbor, plain and mountain, by the quaint water-front with its shell-piles, oyster houses and sharpies, and by the vivid lore of the aged sea-captains. The native-born painters have actually arisen who have portrayed the ruddy cliffs of East Rock, the singularly formed and beautiful range known since Revolutionary times as 'the Sleeping Giant,' the broad salt meadows, and this unique landscape, so like in its elements to the world-famous Edinboro; but her historian is still waited for by Fair Haven. When he comes, he may find some value in the following material from sources literary and oral, from old deeds, lichen-grown burial stones, forgotten newspapers and reminiscences of voyages in ships that have lain for decades miles under blue water.

A geological foreword is in place here. Probably the most enthusiastic Fair Havener that ever admired the outlook from the Heights would be satisfied to have the history of the locality begun with the red sandstone which extends vertically downward for three miles beneath his feet. That would be to begin eight or nine million years ago, though the region was unspeakably an-

cient even then. An observer in those days could have seen no harbor, no plain, no Rock, no meadows, no 'Sleeping Giant;' perhaps the waters had not even entered the old river valleys to form the Sound. Instead, there was a broad depression to which the uplands, east and west, contributed their sediments. In a semi-arid climate, like that of Wyoming today, a sparse vegetation of conifers, tree-ferns and palm-like cycads depended for existence on occasional torrential rains. Across the sediments in search of herb or flesh for food ran or leaped swift kangaroo-shaped dinosaurs, of all sizes from the diminutive young to the giant adults; their bird-like footprints have been kept by the sediments while the models of the Peabody Museum make them real to our imagination.

Then came the period when molten lavas of trap-rock were forced up through fissures in the sandstone. These hardened, and stood at last, when sculpturing rain had chiseled away the adjacent stone, as the precipices of East Rock. Later came the ice of the great glacier and the reindeer whose bones have been found at Quinnipiac. Swollen by the melting of this ice the rivers built the plain of Fair Haven, and at a later date, with their silt, filled deep and far-inreaching waters to make the meadows.

The Indian village that was the predecessor of Fair Haven lay half way between Ferry street bridge and Granniss Corner. It was on a trail which was a main highway long before European settlement. The course of this trail is followed by Farren avenue.

Europeans first took possession of Fair Haven in 1640, almost as early as any section of this coast. In that year this district, designated as the 'Necke,' or peninsula, was occupied for tillage in large farms by families bear-

ing names still represented among us, such as Atwater, Mansfield and others. The name of the 'Necke' has come down to us in 'Neck Bridge,' as the State street bridge is sometimes called.

The district was also in those early days known as the 'Farmes' or the 'East Farmes.' These families, though few in number, desired a partial independence, and in 1679 were constituted a separate village, the name being 'the village on the sides of the East River,' or 'the East side village.' The term 'village' simply meant the scattered farms, the settlement by the river being much later. About 1680 came the first 'Neck Bridge,' a hundred years before any other Fair Haven bridge.

In 1784 the village became a part of New Haven city, to withdraw again in 1837. The final union came in 1870.

Also in 1784 the first bridge at Grand avenue was built, replacing an old ferry. It had a draw at the west end and many abutments. There were no sidewalks for pedestrians. It became much out of repair, with holes in the planking into which vehicles occasionally got. About 1861 it was replaced by a bridge with no draw, but with fewer abutments, and with sidewalks separated from the roadway by light iron bars. This bridge lasted for 36 years, or until the time of the present drawbridge.

The main highway to the east in 1785 ran straight from Neck Bridge to this bridge.

About 600 feet south of the bridge, on the east side of the river, lay Dragon Point, so called from the seals that sunned themselves upon it. The bridge was therefore called Dragon Bridge, and was a landmark by which points in the neighborhood were located. Thus J. Rowe's tavern (still standing at 182 North Front street) was described in 1814 as at Dragon Bridge. The bridge per-

haps existed before the oystering settlement, and must anyhow have given it a powerful impetus. From bridge and point the settlement took a name which unofficially survived till 1877, 'Dragon.' In 1850 the place was sometimes called 'Fair Dragon.'

We find the name of 'Fair Haven' thoroughly established by 1827, having been chosen at a public meeting not long before. The first captain to visit the settlement of Quinnipiac, almost 190 years before this time, was so taken with its beauty that he called it the 'Fayre haven,' and the 'Fair Haven Church', which stood on the site of the United Church and was attended by the Dragonites, had kept the name alive. (Probably in the name of this church Fair Haven was felt as an alternative name for New Haven.) The name was therefore familiar as well as appropriate, and the more acceptable, as adding yet another to the little group of 'Havens' about the bay.

It is interesting to note that New York, Vermont and Michigan, as well as Connecticut, have each a Fair Haven near a New Haven.

The river also has had several names—'East River,' 'Quinnipiac,' 'Dragon River,' 'Wallingford River,' and now 'Quinnipiac' once more.

The 'founder of Fair Haven,' according to a monument in the Fair Haven Union Cemetery, was a certain Heman Hotchkiss. He built the first house in Fair Haven about 1790, on the site now occupied by the Adventist church. This house, much remodelled, still stands and is on the north side of Chatham street, three houses from the corner of North Front.

By 1808 there were about 50 houses including John Rowe's tavern, and about 150 inhabitants, supported mostly by oystering. In this year Nathaniel Granniss gave a site for a school, while Stephen Rowe gave

ground for a cemetery. In 1814 a long red brick schoolhouse was built on the Granniss site. This served also for the neighborhood prayer meetings.

In 1815 a battle between the longshoremen and the Yale students was fought in and about the tavern. This was an incident in a long warfare, of which the young ladies of Fair Haven were the occasion. The young women had a wide reputation for attractiveness, while the longshoremen safe-guarded their own interests, and for fifty years disputed the incursions of outsiders by all means short of murder. A dance was to be held in the tavern. A small party of students sent out to reconnoiter were, except one or two, captured by the oystermen and locked up there. The survivors of the party brought the news to the college, which, under a leader (elected for such occasions and called the 'Bully'), was soon in full force about the tavern. The Bully forced his way in, subdued three antagonists at once, and the prisoners were triumphantly rescued.

July 31, 1827, was long remembered in the village for the drowning of four boys in the river near the island.

In 1830 the Fair Haven Congregationalists, who had previously worshiped in East Haven or at the United Church, built upon the Granniss gift the First Congregational (or 'Old Brick') Church, with a spire, which after 1844 was used for a clock tower. This was a large structure. The interior had a high pulpit, two side aisles and side and rear galleries. The music was supplied by a choir of stringed instruments, Joshua Pearl, the master of the Academy, being chorister. The basement served as a school room and for school meetings.

The church was used as a house of worship for 23 years, and then for a dozen years as a public hall. About 1864 it was remodeled to become the Grand avenue (then

Grand street) School, and was finally replaced by the Strong School.

The Methodists built their first church in 1833 and their second in 1835. The present structure is their third house of worship.

The First Church people later built a chapel near the church, on a site through which the roadway of Perkins street now passes. In 1853 this was moved to stand behind the new First Church. It was moved again in 1877, and is now a dwelling house on Middletown avenue.

About 1836 better educational facilities were provided by means of the Fair Haven Academy, which stood till 1885 on Clinton avenue, midway between Pine and Grand streets. The first master was Joshua Pearl. Many students came from a distance, and these boarded with Mr. Pearl. It is said that Horace Greeley's wife was at one time a student at the academy. Mr. Pearl's residence was on the site now occupied by the Home for the Friendless, and had previously been the first parsonage. The second master was a Mr. Rogers, noted for a violent temper. His chastisements are vividly remembered by some of the oldest residents of the place. The victims were sure to receive handsome presents afterward.

In 1838 Fair Haven had 1000 inhabitants. Lambert's History of New Haven Colony has a drawing of the West Side as it appeared at that time. The square tower of the Academy is seen between the spires, each built in several stories, of the 'Old Brick' and the Methodist churches. These buildings have all been removed. The Grand avenue bridge is shown, and just below it a large vessel is discharging a cargo intended for storage in the building now occupied by Salisbury. East Pearl and South Front streets are well lined with houses. No buildings stand on the river side of South Front; indeed

the tide often came up into the street, and the bowsprits of vessels might extend completely across it. There were no docks, but the shell piles opposite the houses show the use to which the high basements were put. Ballast for vessels was taken from adjacent shores, and the large excavation behind Central Hall is a proof of the preëminent importance of the landing below the bridge.

The large vessels were engaged in distant trade, especially that in oysters with Chesapeake Bay, or in carrying merchandise to the West Indies, with return cargoes of sugar, molasses or pineapples.

The first oyster boats on the river were square ended batteaux. An improvement were the canoes, of which there were two importations from Cayuga Lake—one in 1832 and another in 1837. A canoe was worth $50. Sharpies did not come in till later, being introduced by an Austin, who is said to have invented them. The second sharpie was built by James Goodsell, who improved the model. These beautiful boats are not especially seaworthy, but are light, swift, capacious and exactly adapted to our waters. From here they were introduced to the Virginia and North Carolina coasts, where they are extensively used.

In October, just before the law on the taking of oysters would be off, great numbers of people from inland would gather in Fair Haven. The next day the river would be so full of boats that one might walk along its surface dry shod from Dragon bridge to Red Rock (Ferry street bridge) by stepping from boat to boat. The oysters were picked over and the smaller ones thrown away to die. Nevertheless, in spite of this utter wastefulness, the wonderful beds lasted for many years.

The villagers' fondness for a practical joke was great,

and the visitors did not always get away without some experience of it. For example, a boat would vanish and after a long search would be found up in the top of a tree. Many good stories are told along the shore, which in print must go without the names, as that of the old captain who, as he sat in the back room of the grocery, insisted on monopolizing the paper, and even after he went to sleep, held it fast; the boys set the paper on fire.

Mrs. E. C. M. Hall has in her possession the Constitution and Records for 1842–49 of the Ladies' Home Missionary Association of the First Congregational Church. The first meeting was held at the house of Captain Davis, Sept. 29, 1842, with the following officers:

President, Mrs. M. R. Barnes; Secretary, Mrs. O. C. Wheaton; Managers, Mrs. N. H. Linsley, Mrs. L. C. B. Keep.

April 1, 1843, the association paid $152 for blinds, oilcloth and carpets for the church. Dec. 7, 1847, it joined with the other Ladies' Benevolent Association to hold a fair at the chapel with the purpose of 'reducing the debt now resting on the same.' As a result $165 was paid to a building committee composed of Horace Barnes, John S. Farren and Augustus Y. Conklin.

The officers of the association in 1848 were:

President, Mrs. James Broughton; Secretary and Treasurer, Miss Frances Wheaton; Directresses, Mrs. Orrit Wheaton, Mrs. Jared Mallory, Mrs. Wyllis Hemingway.

In 1852 came the Shore Line Railroad with its lofty trestle.

In 1853, Rev. Burdett Hart of the First Congregational Society being the prime mover, a new church was built in front of the cemetery, the spire of which was 234 feet high, the loftiest in the State. It was a conspicuous landmark for sailors until 1877 when it was removed as no longer safe.

In the same year (1853) the Second Congregational Church was formed from the First, and the Third, a short-lived church, had soon separated from the Second. Its place of worship was what is now known as Central Hall.

The winter of 1856 was terribly rigorous, sleighs crossing the Sound on the ice from Stratford Point to Port Jefferson. For our busy little port these conditions meant wreck and death.

In the Civil War there was a military camp on Grapevine Point.

In 1870 at its union with the city of New Haven the village had 5600 inhabitants and had extended back from the Quinnipiac river to Blatchley avenue. The next decade saw the district between this and Mill river well filled with dwellings.

Barber, in his History and Antiquities of New Haven, p. 197, says of Fair Haven in 1870:

'The leading business of the place is the oyster trade, and numerous vessels are employed in the business, which is said to be carried on to a greater extent in this place than any other in the United States, with perhaps the exception of Baltimore. To this latter place many who have their residence in Fair Haven resort to carry on their business. During the winter months oysters are brought to Fair Haven from various places, principally from Virginia. In 1868 about 95 cargoes, comprising about 400,000 bushels, were brought here, and great quantities are laid down in beds, which much improves their flavor. Considerable attention is also given to the culture of the oyster in the harbor. They are exported to all parts of our country, to Canada, West Indies and other parts of the world.'

This year of 1870 witnessed along with the union of Fair Haven with the City, that of the Fair Haven and New Haven school districts. The Fair Haven school officers of this year were:

Board of Education—Jas. P. Smith, F. D. Kellogg, Alfred Thomas, Luther Ives, John C. Bradley, Thomas D. Jones, H. W. Broughton, Samuel Hemingway, Charles C. Blatchley.

President of the Board—James P. Smith.
Clerk of the District—E. P. Goodsell, Jr.
Secretary of the Board—Curtis S. Bushnell.
School Superintendent—Curtis S. Bushnell.
Treasurer of the District—Lyman Woodward.
Collector of the District—Cortez Watson.

At this time there were about 650 children in the two buildings, the old Academy and the Grand Street School. The indebtedness of the district was $6000. The teachers were:

H. W. Avery, Principal; Catherine E. Hilliard, Nellie B. Morse, Harriet E. Clark, Emma C. Woodward, Lottie D. Butler, Attie E. Clark, Jennie E. Avery, Josephine A. Clark, Maria L. Breen, H. Maria Woodford, M. J. Warren.

The following passage from the last annual report (1870) of the Fair Haven School District will recall to many even now a gracious personality:

Death of a Teacher.

The shadows of death have fallen upon our teachers' circle. By the death of Miss Hattie E. Clark, of Room No. 7, in the Graded School, we mourn the loss of one, eight years of whose life were devoted to the duties of a teacher among us. Her genial courtesy, her conscientious and earnest devotion to the work in which she was engaged, the friendly affection of her pupils, the warm and kind regard in which she was held by her associates, who affectionately draped in mourning the place of her last labors on earth, have left many pleasant memories of this devoted and successful teacher.

The writer has now covered the period of which it was his intention to speak. Some of the most important of the Fair Haven family names should certainly be subjoined, as the Hemingways, Rowes, Tuttles, Smiths, Bradleys, Mansfields, Goodsells, Grannises, and Mallorys. Also something more should be said of the shipping interests, particularly the foreign trade.

The magnitude of those interests is shown by the fact that in 1856 the First Church had 48 sea captains as members of its congregation, many of whom now lie buried behind the towering spire that overlooks 300 square miles of salt water.

Many of them followed the sea from childhood; often on ships built in their own port. There is therefore a particular appropriateness in the emblems upon the monuments in the cemetery; the anchor, the hawser, the ship under full sail. It was truly a perilous profession, as is

shown by the legends on the monuments, such as 'lost at sea,' 'wrecked on Abaco,' 'in the sea his body sleeps,' 'the sea shall give up its dead.' Ice, fire, collision, rock and hurricane, all took their toll of the fleet. The most successful of all the captains lost three ships before the tide of his prosperity began to flow in.

One of the thrilling disasters was suffered by Captain John A. Hardy on the schooner C. J. Van Name, a vessel which for the sake of speed had been built extremely sharp and was over sparred.

Captain H. was outward bound to Cuba, and had as passengers a Cuban boy and girl who had been at school in New York. On the deck were four pieces of scantling. In the night it blew heavily, and though the wind went down, the sea continued heavy. About four in the morning three great waves struck the vessel, and she went down so quickly that the girl, who was asleep, and the steward, who had rushed below to warn her, both went down with her. The small boat also was carried down, leaving nothing floating but a rope fender and four scantlings, each 18 feet long and six inches by six. The Cuban, who was an expert swimmer, secured the fender, which the crew unraveled, and with the rope lashed the scantlings into a raft. They were now hundreds of miles out at sea, without food or water except as they sucked it from their rain-soaked clothes. The sea steadily broke over the raft. In a few hours the sharks found them. One big fellow who nosed closely at them, got a knife in his shoulder, with which he went off, and the other sharks, seeing the blood, went off also in pursuit of him. All the castaways expected to perish and be eaten by the sharks, but on the third day a schooner was seen. They lifted up one of their number as high as they could and he waved his jacket. The captain of the schooner was

astonished to see in mid-ocean a number of men apparently standing upon the water without support. As the vessel approached, the men upon the raft thought she would run them down, but she came up beside them with beautiful seamanship, threw lines, and they were soon on board, were taken to Panama and assisted home.

Capt. Hardy was twice wrecked after that, on one occasion cutting the small boat away only just as the vessel lurched under. He was never able to swim a stroke, yet he lived to die on land at a good old age.

Captain James H. Woodhouse of Perkins street in his 77th year wrote and privately printed a remarkable autobiography, giving the history of his voyages from 1838 to 1874. He had built nearly 40 vessels, had been ordinary seaman, mate and master. His longest voyage was on a whaler out of New Bedford, and lasted nearly four years. The time element did not seem to count. Nothing was thought of running 2000 miles to the Azores to add a couple of men to the crew. They were six months at sea before they saw any whales, and these they could not take because of the heavy weather. The voyage was along nearly the same track as that described in Dana's 'Two Years Before the Mast,' and this graphic book of Captain Woodhouse is a good companion to that classic. The narrative is diversified by such episodes as the taking of terrapin at the Galapagos Isles, climbing of 8000 foot peaks in Otaheite, and the putting in for water at the valley of skeletons between Chili and Peru. Here a Peruvian army, encamped in a valley surrounded on two sides by giant and impassable spurs of the Andes and on a third side by the ocean, were surprised by the Chilians coming from the land side. No mercy was shown. The Peruvians all perished and the skeletons were left to cover the ground for a long distance inland. The most excit-

ing story of the captain's many voyages tells of escaping from the Spaniards when they tried to detain his ship under the charge of carrying arms to the Cuban revolutionists. He ran close under a Spanish fort, outsailed a coast guardship, and when pursued by a steam frigate took advantage of the misty weather to alter his course, so sending the frigate about 200 miles down the coast on a fruitless chase. A year later on he was placed on the list of those gratuitously pardoned by Queen Isabella as an expression of her gratitude to Heaven for the birth of Don Alphonso.

[The reader who has been sufficiently interested to come so far in the narrative will excuse an Old Fair Havener for concluding it with an endeavor to express his sentiments toward his native place in verse that is at least heart-felt. It is not the Fair Haven of the present day that is in mind, but the remembered Fair Haven of 1880.]

THE LAND OF THE HEART

Where once I went, like a lad to his play,
To stray and to strive in the cities of men,
I would wander back by the wending way
To come to the Land of the Heart again.

Boyhood to Manhood with gesture gay
Beckons, I follow; the way is good
With him and Morn through the pleasant wood—
Oh, there's song in the bough and there's dew on the spray.

Through the pleasant wood to the lookout trees
Where the valley sinks and the soul is still;
Something holy like Sabbath peace
Seems here, as I gaze from the quiet hill.

Yonder there see the lone Rock rear
Ruddy cliffs in the morning sky!
Under, the scenes to boyhood dear
Steeped in the freshness of dawning lie.

There is the City! and there the strand!
And the haven fair where the tides are met
By waters sweet from the inner land:
And there is the Giant sleeping yet.

To the blue far Peak, and the Northern skies
Green meadows reach in a grassy floor;
Below us the Village lines either shore
Of the white-capped wave where the sea-gull flies.

And well do I know each home where the trees
Like a lake of green the plain embower;
And well do I know the square church-tower
Far-seen by the sailor bound home from the seas;

And well I know who behind it lie,
Those whom I forget not or far or near—
But the school-clock strikes, and the moments fly;
And the waters are calling from wharf and pier.

With flooring of plank and buttress of stone
A bridge o'er the narrow billow is thrown;
It weds the shores like a marriage ring
And Fair Haven's sundered halves are one.

There are times of beauty! but seek not here
When the tide runs low with the mid-day near,
When the stakes are a-quiver in the hurrying river
Like things that suffer, or things that fear.

But come with the night when the clustering
Of the glittering squadrons mustering
Breaks in starry surge on the deeps of Heaven,
Or come when the day is westering.

To Youth and Pleasure the upper flow
Of the stream belongs: to the Island row
The shouting lads; light laughs from the wave;
The free, glad winds o'er the meadows go.

But southward encroaching hills and piers
Constrain the darkened current, that bears
The outbound shipping as Manhood grave
Its burden toward seas of the endless years.

How all has come back! There the Cricket floats
By King's old dock, no sight so fair
In the summer morn, beloved of boats.
And what! Is it Albert and Lewie there?

'Hey! fellows. You've brought the lunch along
For a row up the river? Oh, yes, I see.
How queer that we're boys! We've been men so long!
But it's fine! It is just as it used to be!'

'And the tide's high, and the breeze is strong,
And the swimming grand as grand can be,
And, supposing the turn at the oar seems long,
We won't ever grumble, no, boys, not we!'

'And when it is night we will climb the lane
With the jingling oarlocks, and from the damp
Of the dark gaze in through the window-pane
On Father and Mother and evening lamp.'

Ah! the vision is closed, for the stern To-day
Locks the heart's lost land behind portals fast;
'Twere a feebler bar if across the way
The mountain-chains of a world were cast.

And yet I am sure on some Future fair
Those gates shall open with evening star,—
And there the mates of my boyhood are,
And Father and Mother and God are there!

FAIR HAVEN HEIGHTS, August 1, 1916.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

By J. T. Hathaway.

In 1855 an attempt was made to establish a newspaper in the village, and from that date until 1860, The Fair Haven Tribune made its regular weekly appearance. (The paper is now only remembered by a few aged persons who made kites of it when they were boys.) Under the heading of the paper was the motto, 'An Independent Press for an Independent People.' The editor in his salutatory said that the paper would be independent in politics, and neutral as far as neutrality did not conflict with manly independence.

The Tribune was a respectable looking sheet and compared favorably with other papers of the State. No paper was of more than four pages then, and Sunday papers and sporting pages and glaring advertisements were unknown. While the Tribune contained the general news of the day it was somewhat of a literary paper also. Many beautiful things appeared in it which have become classics now. The first productions from the pen of Rev. W. H. H. Murray were first published in the Fair Haven Tribune. Miss Elizabeth G. Barber was another contributor. She was the daughter of John W. Barber the historian. The passing of this lady from the scenes of earth was extremely sad. She married a sea captain and accompanied him on a voyage to China. When the vessel was homeward bound she died of cholera and was buried in the China Sea.

The Tribune did good service in advocating better educational facilities, the introduction of gas into the village, the building of a new bridge over the Quinnipiac,

and other improvements. George W. Granniss wrote interesting letters from California when the gold seekers and undesirable characters of all degrees were flocking to that distracted country, and when the vigilance committee reigned supreme. Rev. Burdett Hart, in his search of renewed health, contributed letters from the West and from Europe under the heading of 'Western Waif,' and 'Homeward Drift.'

There was not so much attention paid to local news in the fifties as at the present day. Some of the local affairs that occupy so much space in some of the papers now was considered too insignificant to notice.

One day, when the editor was seated at his desk, a little man came bustling into the room with the salutation, 'I am Signor Blitz; you know me.' It was the world-renowned magician himself. He called to make inquiries about a hall in which to give one of his wonderful entertainments, but not succeeding in securing one, the villagers missed a rare treat.

The most enjoyable entertainments given in the old Brick Church in the fifties were the unique concerts of the Continental Vocalists, who made frequent visits to the village. The original company consisted of Franklin, Smith, Huntington and Frisbie. They dressed in the old Continental uniform, and they sang old songs, such as Twenty Years Ago, Robin Ruff, Long Long Ago, Be Kind to the Loved Ones at Home, and other old songs that awakened the memory of bygone days.

The Tribune circulated in many States, east, north, south, and as far west as the Golden Gate. A gentleman from this section found it on the counter in a store in a remote town in Texas. 'How did you get this paper here?' he asked the proprietor. 'Why there is a young man here who takes it.' 'Where is he? I want to see him.'

The paper had many warm friends in the village, who looked for its weekly visits with pleasure. A prominent New Haven merchant wrote the editor, 'I would rather miss a good dinner than miss the Fair Haven Tribune.' While the paper was appreciated at home, in some other parts of the country it was not esteemed so highly.

In 1859, when John Brown stirred up the smouldering fires of the irrepressible conflict between Freedom and Slavery, a postmaster down in Virginia returned a copy of the Tribune that came to his office for a subscriber, with the cheerful intelligence, 'Your paper has been ordered to be burned by the J. P.' About the same time a subscriber in Alabama wrote, 'Don't send me any more papers.' He was in danger of being mobbed.

From these incidents it would seem that the Fair Haven Tribune was a paper of some importance as well as influence. In pro-slavery days northern editors considered it a great honor to have their papers indicted at the south as incendiary publications.

Some of the lads who served as carriers on the Tribune in those years of long ago, did good service for their country in the great rebellion. One of them, Edwin Pierpont, received a medal for bravery at Fort Wagner.

The oyster business was probably at its zenith when our village paper was launched upon the stormy sea of adversity. The following article which appeared in one of the early numbers may be of interest to the present generation:

Many people think of our village as nothing more or less when it was yclepted Dragon--a name which to those who are unacquainted with its curious origin has a twang of badness about it which we utterly repudiate. In those times oysters enough were taken out of the native bed to furnish several very good suppers of an evening. The people did not suffer from the lack of them in their homes. Occasionally an enterprising man navigated a wheelbarrow load of the bivalves

to the neighboring city; or a solitary knight-errant went forth into the remote regions of Wallingford or Durham, with himself and two kegs of the interesting articles balanced after the manner of John Gilpin's jugs on the back of his redoubtable steed. The business has increased *some* since then.

The old beds in our river and down in our harbor are pretty much exhausted. Our navigators have explored out at Fire Island and Egg Harbor, and have gone down on the coast to Virginia, and they are doing quite a business, as the plain figures indicate.

Last year 77 vessels, the united tonnage of which was 9,130 tons, were entered on the books of a single office in the village, all engaged in this trade. Probably there were at least enough more in the same trade to make the whole number at the height of the season, 100 vessels of between 11,000 and 12,000 tons. In the 77 vessels referred to above were brought 644,000 bushels of oysters. In the whole number, say 825,000 bushels: The English folks thought they were doing a large thing in that line when they brought 14,000 or 15,000 bushels of oysters to London in a year, employing 200 vessels of small tonnage to accomplish it. At one time 30 vessels have been known to be afloat at our wharves, containing more than 70,000 bushels of oysters. It is not uncommon to see 10 or 20 vessels lying in the river at the same time, having arrived together from the southern trip. We suppose it takes 500 men to man these 100 vessels.

How many persons are employed in loading them, in the Chesapeake and elsewhere during the winter season, we cannot even guess. They are delivered in baskets, from small boats, by men of various shades of color—native American, native Africo-American, and foreigners, and are paid for in hard American coin.

As nearly as we can make it out, 800 persons are employed by the firms or individuals, who hire from 15 to 80 hands each in opening the oysters in this village. Then there are probably 200 more who are not thus hired, making a total of 1000 persons who find employment in this department of the business. Mrs. B. said to us a day or two since, that she had opened 108 quarts in 8½ hours. Some will do even more than this. From 60 to 75 persons are probably employed in putting up into cans and kegs and shipping the opened oysters. How many more are engaged in distributing them with teams and delivering them at railroad stations and elsewhere, we cannot say; enough to make the village lively when they are at work.

Six tin shops are engaged in making cans for this business. A single factory in the village made, during the year ending April, 1855,

275,000 oyster kegs, and soldl during the same time, 302,000. 16,000 can and keg boxes were made at the same establishment. About 200,000 kegs are annually made in Cheshire for this market.

In the fall of the year wild pigeons used to come in considerable numbers to the woods on the east side of the river, to feed on the cedar berries. Some of the villagers had stands or stages erected there and reaped quite a harvest of the wild birds. Pigeons could be bought in the village markets for $1.00 a dozen.

A National Calamity.

In 1865 the writer had charge of the mechanical department of the New Haven Palladium. Shortly after he entered the office on the morning after Good Friday, Henry Peck, an occasional writer on the paper, came down from the editorial room and remarked, 'Some of the passengers that came on the late train last night say the President has been killed. I will go out and see about it.' He went out to the telegraph office and came back in a few minutes and said, 'Yes—they have killed the President.' We could hardly take Mr. Peck's report seriously, but were soon obliged to do so, by the arrival of other persons connected with the paper, who confirmed the report.

Col. William M. Grosvenor was one of the editors of the Palladium at that time. He soon made his appearance and preparation was made to get out an edition of the paper, which was not as easy a matter in those days as it is now. The first edition bore the announcement: 'Startling News! President Lincoln and Secretary Seward Assassinated! Death of the President!'

The excitement and grief caused by this great calamity was most intense. One man came in the office and said, 'Well, we have Andy Johnson left, and if they kill

him, we have Lafayette Foster.' Mr. Foster was Senator from Connecticut, and at that time, President of the Senate. He now became acting Vice President. He was a person of a great deal of dignity.

Six editions of the Palladium were issued that day. The amount of telegraphic material that came over the wires from Washington and other points, was amazing. Col. Grosvenor was completely swamped by it. After he had used what he could, he tied up a great pile of manifold for his colleague, and labeled it, 'A drowning man's legacy to his unfortunate successor.'

Rev. John S. C. Abbott.

In one of the latest editions of the paper it was announced that the Rev. J. S. C. Abbott would preach a sermon the next day at the Howe Street Church, on the Assassination of President Lincoln. We had a great desire to hear Mr. Abbott. We had read portions of his History of Napoleon as it was being published in Harper's Magazine in the 50s and were charmed with it.

The next afternoon we walked to the city from Fair Haven to hear Mr. Abbott. (Street cars did not run Sundays fifty years ago.) There was quite a crowd assembled in front of the church waiting for the doors to open. The Howe Street Church was a small church located at the corner of Howe and Martin streets. When the doors were opened, we took a seat in the gallery, where we could have a good view of the speaker. The pulpit was draped with the American flag. Mr. Abbott was a very pleasing person in appearance, of medium height, and about 60 years of age. His hair was dark and his whiskers white.

Before he began to speak Mr. Abbott came to the front of the pulpit and motioned to some one in the audience.

A gentleman rose and came forward, and was welcomed in the pulpit. It was Deacon Smith, a person well known in religious circles in those days.

Mr. Abbott paid an eloquent tribute to Lincoln:

> Noble Abraham! True descendant of the Father of the Faithful; honest in every trust, humble as a child, tender hearted as a woman, who could not bear to injure even his most envenomed foes, who in the hour of triumph was saddened lest the feelings of his adversaries should be wounded by their defeat, with charity for all, malice toward none, endowed with common sense intelligence never surpassed, and with powers of intellect which enabled him to grapple with the most gigantic opponents in debate, developing abilities as a statesman which won the gratitude of his country and the admiration of the world, and with graces of amability which drew to him all generous hearts; dies by the bullet of an assassin!

Mr. Abbott compared Grant to Napoleon, and Sheridan to Napoleon's great cavalry officer, Murat. When he came to speak of the new President, Andrew Johnson, he said, 'Now, let us be careful what we say.'

Governor Buckingham in his Fast Day Proclamation had said that 'the oath of a high office had been taken with a stammering tongue,' which was a pretty hard rap at Johnson. It created a sensation. It was claimed by some of Johnson's friends that he was a temperate, if not a temperance man. Mr. Abbott took the precaution not to add any more fuel to the flames.

In 1861 Mr. Abbott came from Brunswick, Maine, to New Haven to accept the pastorate of the Howe Street Church. He continued to fill the pulpit until Feb. 12, 1866, a period of nearly five years. During that time, in addition to his pastoral duties, he wrote and published his History of the Civil War, a work of over 1100 large octavo pages. The first volume was issued in 1862 and the second late in 1865.

In 1866 Mr. Abbott visited Europe to obtain material

for his History of Napoleon Third. Soon after this he purchased the house on the corner of Poplar and Grand streets, and moved to Fair Haven, where he lived the remainder of his life. Here he wrote and published that work in a large and exhaustive volume.

When the First Church was without a pastor, Mr. Abbott filled the pulpit for several months, very acceptably to the congregation—always interested in his sermons. He had a pleasing and graceful delivery. His sermons were interspersed with beautiful illustrations—historical, rural and from scenes and incidents of every day life, and were free of verbiage.

Mr. Abbott was a genial, kind hearted Christian gentleman. In one of the evening meetings of which he had charge, he said that a few nights before he found a man trying to break into his cellar, thinking there was some lager beer in there. He took him by the collar, spoke harshly to him and threatened to have him arrested. If he should meet that man now he would humbly ask his pardon for treating him so roughly.

In 1870 Mr. Abbott became acting pastor of the Second Church in Fair Haven, and continued in that relation for about four years. During that time nearly 200 members were added to the church. There was quite a strife among the younger members as to who should have the honor of paying for the carriage to convey Mr. Abbott to and from church.

Mr. Abbott was a ready and voluminous writer, with a style as lucid and graceful as that of Goldsmith and Irving. He was the author of many books, mostly of a historical character, which have had a large sale. He had the faculty of making history interesting. His greatest work is the History of Napoleon Bonaparte, which is a model biography of a wonderful man. This work

is contained in two large octavo volumes of 1277 pages. It occupied his careful attention and study for four years, and is an enduring monument to the memory of its gifted author. It first appeared in Harper's Magazine in the 50s, and attracted wide attention and some criticism. Of all the biographies of the Great Captain that were ever written this is the most graphic and entertaining, and of fascinating interest. It shows Napoleon in his true light, and proves him not to have been the cruel tyrant that has been represented by English writers.

In the preface to that work the author said: 'The history of Napoleon has often been written by his enemies. This narrative is from the pen of one who reveres and loves the Emperor. The writer admires Napoleon because he abhorred war, and did every thing in his power to avert that dire calamity; because he merited the sovereignty to which the suffrage of a grateful nation elevated him; because he consecrated the most extraordinary energies ever conferred upon a mortal to promote the prosperity of his country; because he was regardless of luxury, and cheerfully endured all toil and all hardships that he might elevate and bless the masses of mankind; because he had a high sense of honor, revered religion, respected the rights of conscience, and nobly advocated equality of privileges and the universal brotherhood of man. Such was the true character of Napoleon Bonaparte.

'It has been the endeavor of the author, during the progress of the work, not to write one line which, dying, he would wish to blot. In that solemn hour it will be a solace to him to reflect that he has done what he could to rescue one of the greatest and noblest of names from unmerited obloquy.'

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